

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 5 APRIL 2020.

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans as well as in English at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively on HF and various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed on Echolink by Johan, ZS6JPL. The audio and text bulletins may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za. To join the bulletin mailing list, send an e-mail to the SARL Secretary.

In the news, today:

**DUE DATE FOR THE RENEWAL OF RADIO FREQUENCY SPECTRUM
LICENCES EXTENDED,**

LOCKDOWN JAILBREAK!

and

AMSATSA REPORTS GOOD PROGRESS WITH AFRICUBE.

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.



**DUE DATE FOR THE RENEWAL OF RADIO FREQUENCY
SPECTRUM LICENCES EXTENDED**

Pretoria, 30 March 2020 - Given the state of national disaster and the current 21-day lockdown to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, ICASA has decided to extend the validity period of existing radio frequency spectrum licences in line with Regulation 10 of the Radio Frequency Spectrum Regulations.

In terms of the Regulations, the due date for the renewal of radio frequency spectrum licences is 31 March annually. The Regulations further provide that failure to pay the prescribed licence renewal fee by the due date (i.e. 31 March annually), will cause the expiry of the radio frequency spectrum licence immediately on the next calendar day that marks the beginning of the new financial year.

In this regard, ICASA has resolved to grant all radio frequency spectrum licence holders an extension to renew their licences by no later than the 30th of June 2020.

Do not wait until 30 June 2020 to pay your licence fees - do it now! The Licences fees are available on the front page of the SARL web and in SARL Communication of 25 March 2020 and SARL News for 28 March 2020.

THE APRIL 2020 RADIO ZS AVAILABLE TO ALL

The Council has decided that the April 2020 issue of Radio ZS is available for members and not yet members of the SARL. Click on the link on the front page of the League website to download a copy. Read on page 10 and 17 about My Project and how to win a membership to the SARL. On page 11 you can read about SARAH or Southern African Radio Active Ham.



LOCKDOWN JAILBREAK!

The world is in lockdown and slowly going mad. A jailbreak seems like a good idea and as radio amateurs we have an advantage – a creative imagination and a willingness to tinker!

Let us pretend a little.... We are under house arrest; our homes being monitored by a remote electronic surveillance system and the access control governed by electronic key codes! We can only escape by working together. Once you read this, you will be on the inside track to freedom, we once took for granted! SARAH is our inside agent and she will be giving out electronic key codes. A key code is simply a 4-letter combination (no numbers, spaces, or special characters) and it will allow you to disable the surveillance remotely.

Unfortunately, you cannot use the key codes SARAH gives you on your own home – it needs to be used by someone else. You can, however, use codes given out by other people. At this stage, it is unclear just how many key codes are needed to disable your security surveillance but get as many as you can!

Visit www.sarah.org.za/, register and then find out more about the Lockdown Jailbreak! There is also a PDF document telling you about this activity at www.sarah.org.za/lockdownGame.pdf

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Radio League.



AMSATSA REPORTS GOOD PROGRESS WITH AFRICUBE

AMSATSA held its regular online progress meeting this past Wednesday. During the past few weeks, progress was made on all fronts. The transponder was tested on the air and an actual contact was made through the transponder. Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP installed the transponder on the tower at his house and made a contact with Keith Laaks, ZS6TW. While it was only over a few kilometres distance, the importance of the contact was that there was no interference and the audio quality was good.

This past week Anton Janovsky, ZR6AIC has worked on the software and through a complicated link managed to upload and install newer software remotely. “Anton connected to my computer and took over the machine using TeamViewer and then connected via Wi-Fi to the transponder on my tower,” Hannes, ZS6BZP said. “In normal times we would have simply exchanged a memory stick, but in abnormal times one has to resort to unconventional ways of doing things”.

Further updates will be uploaded this weekend with more testing of the transponder. The next step is to open the testing to local radio amateurs. Full details will be announced on SARL News and on the AMSAT SA Web. The full AfriCUBE development story is available on www.amsatsa.org.za.

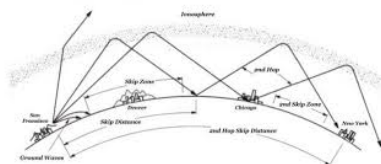
The review meeting was also updated with the other components of AfriCUBE. The space frame is complete, the PC boards for the solar panels have been designed and will be manufactured as soon as the lockdown is over. Work is continuing on the antenna and solar panel deployment and a further prototype will be manufactured as soon as South Africa returns to normal work. The electronic power supply unit is complete. A new interface between the Raspberry Pi and the processor has been designed and the circuit board laid out.

IARU NOISE MONITORING GROUP DISCUSSED REFINEMENTS TO THE PROJECT

During a two-hour online meeting last Monday, the IARU Noise Monitoring group discussed various refinements to the noise monitoring project. The aim is to derive a worldwide data format, so that the collected information can be shared.

The DARC group presented the results of their first 10 stations installed in Germany and compared the results between rural areas, low-density suburbs and high-density suburbs. The SARL group has for some time been discussing various time frame options and the bandwidth of each segment. Currently, each measurement segment covers 1 MHz of the spectrum from 1 to 30 MHz.

While the process in some parts of Europe is different, the SARL group believes that international compatibility can be achieved. The SARL Noise Monitoring group will meet over the next two weeks to finalise the format and make recommendations on how to move forward. The ultimate aim is to develop specifications and make complete units available for installation on sites around the country.



PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to remain at low levels. Currently there is one small sunspot region with a simple magnetic configuration and no flaring activity is expected. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around one. With the recent equinox, the 15 to 30 m bands will, especially late afternoon, provide some good DX fun. Early afternoon there may also even be some surprise 10 m openings. For more information, please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za

Finally, a diary of some upcoming events:

10 April – Good Friday
12 April – Easter Sunday
13 April – Family Day
18 April – World Amateur Radio Day; the Autumn QRP Sprint and the ZS4SRK Balloon contest
19 April – the ZS4 Sprint
21 and 22 April – the Lyrids meteor showers

To conclude our bulletin, a quick overview of our main news item:

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This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

We invite clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, in both English and Afrikaans, if possible, by following the News Inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items to include in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly radio program, Amateur Radio Today at 10:00 Central African Time. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower sideband. A rebroadcast by Andy, ZS6ADY can be heard on Monday evenings at 19:30 Central African Time on 3 620 kHz. We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, edited by Herman Erasmus, ZS6CTA and read by

From the news team, stay healthy, adhere to the regulations and the best wishes for the week ahead.